



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Rick Perry

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Gov. Perry Signs Higher Education Legislation

EL PASO – Gov. Rick Perry today praised lawmakers for fully funding the Texas Tech Medical School, increasing student financial aid and investing in a new incentive funding program for institutions of higher learning, and also signed into law House Bill 2978, which establishes an engineering scholarship program.

“Texas faces unique healthcare challenges along the border that not only require more doctors, but a fully-funded four-year medical school,” Perry said. “This historic investment will ensure that Texas Tech will be able to recruit faculty to teach in the El Paso facility, and it will be able to receive the needed accreditation from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education. This is a proud day – one too long in coming – but as someone who has long-advocated this program, I will take late over never anytime.”

The budget passed by lawmakers increases funding for the El Paso Medical School by \$43 million as the governor requested, and also provides bond funding to allow for the completion of the \$6.3 million El Paso Medical Science Building.

Perry also praised lawmakers for taking steps to increase student financial aid and creating an incentive funding program that rewards colleges and universities for improving student performance.

“I am pleased that the final budget included a \$146 million increase in financial aid so that the sons and daughters of working Texans are not priced out of the education that will decide their future,” Perry said, noting that he had asked lawmakers to authorize twice the amount included in the budget.

“While the legislature did not take the bold step it could have to reform higher education funding, it did take an important initial step by tying \$100 million in funding to the meeting of performance goals, such as higher minority graduation rates, graduating more students in critical fields and reducing the time it takes to graduate,” Perry said.

HB 2978 establishes an engineering scholarship program for students in the top 20 percent of their class who have graduated from high school with at least a 3.5 GPA in math and science classes. It also orders the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to establish one-week

summer programs at university campuses for middle school and high school students interested in math, science and engineering concepts.

“I am proud to put my name on a bill that encourages the technological curiosity of students in working class neighborhoods as much as students from gated communities,” Perry said. “Though the \$2 million in funding is far short of the \$43 million I proposed for an all-encompassing technology scholarship program, my hope is that it is just the beginning of a renewed investment in scholarship programs impacting critical fields like math, science and engineering.”

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